United Nations A/C.3/53/15

General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 November 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Third Committee
Agenda item 110 (c)
Human rights questions: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Letter dated 12 November 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

In his statements to the Third Committee on 5 and 6 November 1998, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Albania to the United Nations made a series of incorrect and ill-intended allegations regarding the situation in the Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija and the policy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In that context, I have been instructed by my Government to state the following:

1. In order to be able to make credible statements regarding the situation in Kosovo and Metohija, the Republic of Albania is first to do the following:

(a) Revoke the 1991 decision recognizing the phantom "Republic of Kosovo" and close down the diplomatic representative office of that illegal creation in Tirana, thus abiding, albeit belatedly, by the basic principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of the United Nations concerning respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other States and non-interference in their internal affairs;

(b) Comply with the demands in Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998) and 1203 (1998) that it has been in contempt of, cut the arms supply and financial flows and desist from rendering support to the terrorists of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in Kosovo and Metohija;

(c) Close down KLO terrorist and foreign mercenary boot camps in Tropoje, Bajram Curri and Kuks.

Instead of upholding international law and complying with the demands of the international community, the Government of the Republic of Albania has resorted to cheap propaganda, based on selected parts of reports of the representatives of the international community.

2. The statement that "ethnic Albanians in Kosovo have been for decades submitted to ethnic repression and intolerance and that they have been denied their most basic human

98-35889 (E) 191198

rights" is not true. It is true that the separatist leaders of the Albanian political parties in Kosovo and Metohija have prevented the members of the Albanian national minority to use a broad spectrum of human and minority rights that have been granted to them by the Constitutions of the Republic of Serbia and Yugoslavia since 1946. All these rights have been extensively used by the members of 26 other national minorities in the Republic of Serbia. The separatist leaders of the Albanian political parties prevented the members of the Albanian national minority from using these rights in an attempt to create a pretext and justification for their policy of breaking up the territorial integrity of Serbia, causing the secession of Kosovo and Metohija and joining it to the Republic of Albania in a drive to realize the project of Greater Albania.

3. The claim that the Serbian authorities pursue "an open policy of genocide and ethnic cleansing supported by brutal military and police action against innocent Albanian civilians" is both untrue and ludicrous. The number of Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija in the last 50 years has quadrupled, whereas the number of Serbs has been reduced by two thirds in that same period. In the last anti-terrorist operation directed at KLA terrorists, the security forces of the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia defended the territorial integrity and the lives and property of the citizens of their country. After all, it was the escalation of terrorism that necessitated the security operation and the blame for the plight of civilians, ethnic Albanian and non-Albanian alike, rests squarely with the terrorists of KLA and the outside forces and countries, primarily the Republic of Albania, aiding and abetting them. The Yugoslav authorities have always made a clear distinction between the civilian members of the Albanian national minority and terrorists. This approach was maintained throughout the security operation. Ethnic Albanian civilians were given protection against terrorists who forced them to leave their homes and were given generous humanitarian and material support to repair their houses and resume normal life upon their return home.

4. Steeped in propaganda, like the mantra of a 90 per cent Albanian population of Kosovo and Metohija, the statement distorts some basic facts about that Serbian province. The separatist leaders of the Albanian national minority in Kosovo and Metohija prevented their fellow Albanians from participating in the last census, while the results of former censuses had been abused by Albanian leaders in Kosovo and Metohija to the detriment of other national minorities and ethnic groups living in the province in substantial numbers. In addition to 250,000 Serbs and Montenegrins, 150,000 Muslims of Serbian extraction, 150,000 Romanies and members of other national minorities (Turks, Vlachs, Croats and others) also live in Kosovo and Metohija. Accordingly, the percentage of ethnic Albanians living in Kosovo and Metohija is much lower than the one often quoted for propaganda purposes and is realistically estimated to stand at between 60 and 70 per cent.

By its claim that a "colonialist rule" has been imposed on Kosovo and Metohija, the Republic of Albania is in breach of the 1913 London Treaty, the 1919 Versailles Treaty and the 1946 Paris Peace Treaty. All these treaties confirm that Kosovo and Metohija belongs to Serbia and Yugoslavia and that they have legal authority in that province. Alongside the 1991 recognition of the phantom Republic of Kosovo, the claim serves to stake out the aspirations of the Republic of Albanian towards that part of the territory of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

5. The statement is telling proof that the Republic of Albania is not guided by the interests of the international community, which coincide with the vital interests of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in promoting the ongoing political process and solving all problems in Kosovo and Metohija exclusively by political means. The statement is therefore repetitive and replete with inaccurate stereotypical allegations of the Republic

of Albania against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its policy. It says nothing about the refusal of the leaders of the Albanian political parties in Kosovo and Metohija to fulfil the demands in Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998) and 1203 (1998): to forfeit separatism; to condemn terrorism; and to resume dialogue immediately and unconditionally. Furthermore, the statement is silent about the fact that armed KLA terrorists sabotage the agreement signed between the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, and the United States Special Envoy, Richard Holbrooke, and continue to carry out terrorist provocations, intercepting, abducting and killing members of security forces and civilians, thus increasing the number of innocent victims and threatening the peace process.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 110 (c).

(Signed) Vladislav **Jovanović**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.